

and force, 'in the contest between a reform of the salt tax and the abolition of the income tax my feeling is that you have chosen to relieve the richer class, which is also the most powerful and the most clamorous'.¹ In all other respects he showed a determination to prevent if possible any undue pressure of taxation upon the Indian masses. 'The natives', he wrote in 1881, 'will be passively loyal to us—active loyalty we cannot expect—if we govern them justly and do not increase their taxes', and in 1881 he wrote to Lord Lytton 'I have always had my suspicions that the land revenue has been over assessed, and always treated with great suspicion the opinion of Sir John Strachey who was for screwing up the land revenue'.

In 1873-4 a famine was threatened in Bihar and part of Bengal in an area where the population was very dense. Lord Northbrook and Sir George Campbell being determined that the record of the Orissa famine of 1865 should not be repeated, large quantities of rice were purchased in Burma; the most elaborate means were taken regardless of cost to transport and distribute it, and relief works were everywhere established. The result was the very large expenditure of nearly six and a half millions on 'a famine of unusual brevity and of no exceptional severity'. But though some of the expenditure was regrettable, the government had erred on the right side, and Lord Northbrook's economy of the finances enabled the charges to be met out of revenue only.

The only other important event of Lord Northbrook's régime in India itself was the trial by commission of one of the most powerful of the ruling princes, Mulhar Rao, the Gaikwar of Baroda. There had been evidences of misgovernment in the state since 1870 when the Gaikwar succeeded. A commission of inquiry had reported in February 1874 that he had been guilty of ill-treating the

¹ Mallet's *Northbrook*, p. 67.